

Migratory Game Bird Committee Skype Meeting/Conference Call, December 17, 2018 from 1-3pm

Attendance: Jason Fleener, Sara Comstock, Trenton Rohrer, Taylor Finger, Todd Cook, Brenda Kelly, Josh Martinez, Brian Glenzinski, Kurt Waterstradt, Kyle Anderson

Current Waterfowl Stamp Cycle Update

Carryover Projects

- Jason went through a spreadsheet of ongoing projects that have been carried over since FY18. Most projects are being used to leverage federal grants, including NAWCA, PR, and GLRI. Notable updates and discussion points included:
 - DU's GHRA wetland restoration projects: Tews and Bohn Farms properties. DU is using stamp funds to leverage Horicon Coastal large NAWCA. Restoration designs and permits are in the works. Funding agreement with DNR in place.
 - Powell Lake and Dunnville WA restorations – Dunnville done, planning and design in the works for Powell Lake...hopefully will complete project during 2019 field season.
 - Crex Refuge Extension water control structure replacements complete.
 - Killsnake wetland restorations – Permits and contractor lined up and ready to go as soon as contractor is ready.
 - Big Muskego Restoration – Phase II. Permits ready, but need to finalize agreement between DNR and DU. Leveraged with small NAWCA, administered by DU.
 - Rock River Restoration – Rechannelization of east branch within Horicon Wildlife Area to improve flow and wetland dynamics. Working with USFWS and ACOE on design concepts.
 - Harvey's Marsh WPA restoration – Project complete by DU and USFWS.
 - Mead WA – 3 dike renovation projects ongoing with progress being made on all of them.

Fiscal Year 2019 Updates (New Projects)

- Badfish WA wetland restoration – Forestry sale planned this winter. Then need to finish design and permits. Construction during 2020 field season?
- Waterloo WA wetland restoration – Design and permits done. Going out for bid and planned for 2019 construction. Both Badfish and Waterloo are connected to Horicon Coastal NAWCA.
- Navarino Wildlife Area, multiple dike renovations – Josh Martinez will check for an update and Jason will follow up.
- Mullet Creek – DNR needs to get site specific agreement to DU (drafted). Mullet Creek Dam Replacement – Dam has been breached and drawn-down for about 5 years. Stamp funds used to leverage NAWCA grant and GLRI funds for a fish passage component. DU Engineering engaged in design, and facilitation of the project.
- Middle North Fork (Crex)– redacted because funds were shifted to increase budget needs for Grettum structure at Fish Lake WA.
- WWA wetland restorations – Agreement and P.O. in place with new projects on the Horizon. Funds leveraged with small NAWCA.

Approximately \$64,000 of waterfowl stamp funds are currently set aside in the contingency fund for emergency needs and for project over-runs.

- Should we put these unallocated funds to supplement PR wetland infrastructure project budgets or should we hold on to the funds for the next cycle? Brian Glenzinski – the funds should be held onto for the next cycle if not used and reallocated to new projects.

Major Maintenance Projects – on DNR managed properties

- The challenge with these project applications, as discussed within the committee from the last round of funding, is that there is often little separation in scoring between projects and committee members are often not familiar with all the sites, which has made funding selections more difficult.
- New project screening, review and selection process to bring forth to the Wildlife Leadership Team for FY20-21 cycle:
 - Begin with DNR applications in the major maintenance category to be sent to WM district supervisors, areas supervisors and the MGBC representative for rank maintenance projects by priority within their districts.
 - Applications by district will be sent to MGBC with rankings
 - MGBC will consider district rankings and recommend which projects will be funded within the statewide funding threshold amongst other applications from DNR and cooperators (restoration/enhancement, equipment, etc.).

Application review and funding selection process continued...

- During FY18-19 cycle, DNR staff sent pre-proposals to district supervisors as a screening tool before approvals were given to pursue a full application. The concept was to engage district staff early in the process with more oversight, minimize the number of applications to be reviewed by the MGBC, and save time for the applicants if a project concept was not viable to pursue funding further.
- A total of 9 pre-proposals were denied statewide, which reduced MGBC review of full applications from what would have been about 50 applications, to 40. The reductions in application review workload were not thought to be significant by committee members, and the burden was shifted to district staff early in the process. Trade-offs did not appear to be worth the effort to continue the pre-proposal review process for the next cycle. Instead, ranking of full applications of Major Maintenance is desired by the committee from WM districts.

Reviewing the Waterfowl Stamp Program – Project Application Guidance Materials document

- High vs. low priority project types:
 - Keep project type list as is in their current categories, except explore bumping specialized wetland equipment purchases from low priority to high priority. Examples of specialized wetland equipment would include Marsh Masters™, airboats, etc. Equipment such as UTV's that could be used for upland work would

not qualify, because usage of this equipment is likely to be used for purposes other than wetland/waterfowl habitat.

- Josh Martinez – Ok with bumping specialized wetland equipment purchases to high priority, but also ok with leaving it as a lower priority.
- Kyle Anderson – Yes, bump specialized wetland equipment purchases to high priority if it is a quality application.
- Kurt Waterstradt – Yes, but keep the waterfowl stamp tied to wetland projects, rather than generalized equipment purchase that could be used for other projects.
- Brenda Kelly – Bump specialized wetland equipment purchases to higher priority. But should we tie a percentage for equipment purchases to the guidelines (i.e. no more than 50% of the total application project cost)?
- Brian Glenzinski – Bump specialized wetland equipment purchases to higher priority. Keep usage tied to wetland projects. But why put a percentage on it in the guidelines; the projects with too much of an equipment budget will be weeded out in the ranking process.
- No thresholds for cost-sharing, but suggest to DNR staff ahead of time that cost-sharing applications will be viewed more favorably in the application selection process.
- Applicants should demonstrate efficiencies of equipment in their write-ups. Sharing equipment between multiple properties and work units will be necessary to ensure adequate usage.

Applications with LTE time:

- Projects applications with too high of an LTE budget percentage, or applications for generalized LTE work without point to specific projects have not been considered well in the review and ranking process in the past, but no specific guidelines have been conveyed to applicants.
- Brenda Kelly – Put the percentage in so the applicant doesn't waste their time if the Committee won't choose an application based on how much money they want to put towards LTE
- Jason Fleener – will check with Mark Witecha (WDNR) on how pheasant and turkey stamp run percentage to LTE time.
- Brian Glenzinski – Agrees with making sure LTE salary is tied to project.
- Brenda Kelly – Salary always seems to come up each time there is a new waterfowl stamp cycle. She thinks making a clarification in the guidelines would be helpful.
- Kyle Anderson – DNR applicants should consider their LTE's coding their work time to a PR budget code instead of duck stamp budgets.

Canada Application Form

- A specialized form was developed during the last cycle to properly capture the details of proposed Canadian habitat work.
- Jason Fleener – will reach out to DU, and Delta Waterfowl for feedback on the current version. Other MGBC members welcome to comment as well.

Meeting ended at 3:00 p.m. Jason will follow-up with the committee via email to continue discussion, including the review of Section V (Project Ranking and Review Criteria), and the state project application form. Comments will be due January 8.

...Post-meeting comments received by email:

- Sumner Matteson – Move consideration of multi species benefits (SGCN's, other waterbirds, etc.) to primary project selection criteria.
- Peter Ziegler – Disagreed and should keep as secondary criteria. Habitat projects focused on waterfowl typically automatically provide benefits to other wetland dependent species as well.
- Peter Ziegler – Some concerns about bumping equipment purchases to the priority application types. If equipment acquisition is a high priority, then the committee will have to diligently screen them to make sure the best ones are given serious consideration for funding. Every time we update this we keep adding priorities to the priority list which dilutes its effectiveness for waterfowl specific benefits, but on the other hand allows for broader inclusion of applications.
- Bruce Urben – Seems like few properties really need more equipment for waterfowl management purposes and it seems the committee can easily make that decision based on application during review if warranted, without being primary criteria.
- Jason – There are several public lands in the state that have large waterfowl/wetland complexes and DNR only has one Marsh Master and two airboats in the Wildlife Management program. If new equipment would be purchased with duck stamp, criteria would be that the equipment would have to be very specialized for wetland use and likely not able to be used/abused for purposes unrelated to wetland/waterfowl management. Any equipment purchased would have to be strategically housed on a major wetland property that needs it and would need to be shared across a multi-county or multi-regional area with other properties. DNR does not have many or any other eligible funding sources that are suited to acquisition of specialized management equipment.
- Kyle – Reviewed draft guidelines document following the conference call and had nothing further to add or modify.